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VIETNAM—HOUR OF DECISION

The Editor

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RAIL CRISIS—WHAT NEXT?

Jock Nicolson

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PRESS PROBLEMS

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Havana—Cheddi Jagan : Tashkent—Dilip Bose
Modern Philosophical Ideas—C. P. Dutt

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Notes of the Month

VIETNAM—HOUR OF DECISION

Always it is necessary for the West to do the fighting itself. Never yet has it been necessary for the Russians to do this. This is on many counts a profoundly disturbing contrast between the Soviet and the Western position in Asia.

Walter Lippman, *New York Herald Tribune*, June 29, 1950

February 14, 1966

Vietnam is today the crux of the world situation as Spain was in the thirties. But with a difference which measures the more advanced stage of the world crisis today. The immediate parallels are obvious. The armed invasion of Spain by Hitler and Mussolini to impose a reactionary military dictator against the people, and the shameful appeasement of the aggressor by the British Tory Government, is paralleled today by the United States armed invasion of South Vietnam to impose a reactionary military dictator, and the shameful appeasement of the aggressor by the present British Labour Government. But the differences are more important than the parallels. Franco did represent a certain solid reactionary militarist and upper class support in Spain. The quick-change succession of puppet generals installed by the United States in South Vietnam represent nothing in the people; so much so that Marshal 'I Love Hitler' Ky has recently declared that elections cannot be allowed at present in South Vietnam since the National Liberation Front would obviously win. The Tory Government's appeasement of the aggression and military invasion of Spain by Hitler and Mussolini took, the hypocritical form of 'non-intervention'. The Labour Government's appeasement of the United States aggression and military invasion of Vietnam takes the even more shameful form of public endorsement and practical support, already with military missions of 'advisers' (troops are asked for next). But the biggest difference is in the world situation.

Honolulu War Plans

The world of today is no longer the world of before 1939. Franco, the protégé of Hitler and Mussolini, won in Spain, despite the heroic resistance of the Spanish people and international democratic support. The second world war followed. Today the balance of the world is changed. Fascist military power was broken by the Soviet

armies and the peoples of the world. The Chinese revolution was victorious against the United States and its protégé Chiang Kai Shek. Imperialism failed in Egypt, in the Anglo-French Suez war. Imperialism failed in Cuba, equally in the Bay of Pigs fiasco and in the Soviet-enforced abandonment of the vast invasion plan of 1962. Imperialism failed in Algeria, after a seven years war of unexampled brutality with half a million troops had to end in recognition of Algerian independence and of the national liberation front which they had previously sought to outlaw. Today all the military concentration and terror let loose by the United States against the Vietnam people has been unable to subdue them. International opposition of the people is rising everywhere, and not least inside the United States. The United States militarists are desperate and reckless, as they see the spectre of failure rising up before them. They proclaim and hotly dispute among themselves a hundred wild strategic adventures to strike out in every direction. Therefore the highest moment of danger and decision is now arising for the world. The new perspective opened by the resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam on January 31, and the Honolulu decisions in February to plan the extension of the war to all South-East Asia, constitutes the most critical and dangerous moment of the modern international situation, and a challenge to all the peoples of the world.

Dilemma of the West in Asia

Already a decade and a half ago political correspondents were analysing the dilemma of the Western imperialist powers, at the stage then reached, in relation to Eastern Asia—a dilemma which is once again being exemplified at a new height by the United States in Vietnam. Equating, in accordance with their customary terminology, the advance of the popular liberation movements with communism, and communism with 'Russia' (today they would also add China), they marvelled how 'Russian' power was advancing by leaps and bounds in these regions without a single Russian soldier being involved, while the West had to pour in troops.

In the disputed area—China, Korea, Formosa, Indo-China, Malaya—Soviet influence and power have expanded without the armed forces of the USSR being committed. On the other hand, nowhere on the mainland of East Asia has communism been contained except by committing French, British or American forces.

Asian communism gains strength from leadership; its standard bearers are all Asian. The leadership and the principal weapons for fighting communism

come from the West because they are not otherwise available.

The communist forces are led by able men like Mao Tse Tung and Chou En Lai in China, by the veteran Ho Chi Minh in Indo-China.

Not Asians, but General Douglas MacArthur, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald and France's High Commissioner in Indo-China, M. Pignon, are the key figures in the anti-communist front.

(Daily Telegraph, June 27, 1950)

The basic truth underlying this analysis has not been changed by all the new circumstances since then, neither by the fact that China is nowadays commonly presented alongside the Soviet Union as representing the red spectre of communism extending its power, nor by the presentation of such feebly unconvincing quisling figures as a Rhee, a Diem or a Ky to give an 'Asian' camouflage for the invading Western troops. General Eisenhower proclaimed the aim of American policy to make 'Asians fight Asians'. In vain. The United States may have begun with a few thousand military 'advisers' in Vietnam. Today it has found it necessary to pour in 200,000 American combat troops, and publicly plan to increase the number to half a million or even more. The drain is denting even the prodigious American budget. The draft is enraging the American people.

BBC on Vietnam

The BBC presented a 'Vietnam Special' early in February to enlighten the public on this foremost international question. In accordance with the customary 'objectivity', 'impartiality' and 'free controversy' of opposing views, which is the special technique of official propaganda in this country, a wide variety of some dozen participants was invited to present and discuss assorted views. All were agreed that the issue of the war, as the Americans understood it, was the struggle against communism, although there were varying views on how best to meet the challenge, or whether it was desirable or possible to attempt to defeat it by military means. In accordance with normal practice, the subject being communism, not one of the dozen participants was a communist. More noticeably, the problem of how to appear not to exclude representation of the very wide body of opinion in the labour movement, including close on one hundred M.P.s signing declarations at one time or another, opposed to support of the war in Vietnam, was solved, not by the participation of one of the leading well known representatives of that viewpoint, such as Michael Foot, Mikardo, Silverman or Zilliacus, but by including, alongside a very vocal and bellicose right-wing Labour M.P. another, whose name was not widely familiar, but who was

declared to represent the opposition in the Labour Party, and whose militancy was demonstrated by his protest that he would not dream of asking the United States to withdraw from Vietnam, but he would urge that more should be spent on economic aid to show the difference of our way of life (the line of President Johnson at Honolulu to cover the war plans).

‘Two Great Powers’?

In the course of this enlightenment of the public (tribute must incidentally be paid to the role of the courageous American Professor Lynd, whose passport has been removed by his Government, but who was not banned by the BBC), a remarkable piece of impartial background information was given to explain why the war was taking place in Vietnam. The war in Vietnam, it was explained, which was bringing so much misery to the people ‘from both sides’, was really ‘a conflict between two great Powers happening to take place in a little unhappy country, Vietnam’. Really? Between *two* great Powers? A curious optical illusion. There are no Russian soldiers fighting in Vietnam. There are no Chinese soldiers fighting in Vietnam. There are only the invading American troops from outside, with their Australian and Korean satellites (Australia has now moved over to the dollar currency). The Vietnam people are fighting to defend themselves to be able to live in peace and freedom from foreign invasion. This is the simple reality which has at all costs to be buried under cover of elaborate surveys of the ‘complexities’ of the ‘problem’.

Contrast of Two Civilisations

There was indeed a contrast of two great Powers at the moment of the American resumption of bombing in Vietnam. But it was a different contrast from that most often presented to the public in this country or the United States. On January 31, 1966, two events coincided which sum up the modern world situation. On that day Luna 9 was launched with its precious cargo of delicate instruments of knowledge to reach four days later the first soft landing on the moon. On that same day the American bombing of North Vietnam was resumed. Two ways of life. On the one side, the demonstration once again of communism leading the world along the paths of peace on the road to the future. On the other side, the renewed demonstration of the barbarism and gangsterism of the dying capitalist social order, raining death and destruction on a people

struggling against heavy odds and initial backward conditions to build their new social order. On the one side, the use of all the miracles of advance of modern science and technology to win peaceful victories, for the extension of the frontiers of human knowledge and the progress of mankind. On the other side, the use of all those same marvels by the world's greatest and most heavily armed imperialist power to bully and batter a weak and small nation, thousands of miles away from the shores of the United States and offering no threat to it, whose only crime is to seek to defend themselves and live in peace from foreign invasion.

Frustrated Giant

But it is just here that arises the immediate menace of still further extending violence, and at the same time the sure ground of confidence for the future, in the present unparalleled situation represented by this heroic life-and-death struggle of the Vietnamese people against the world's greatest imperialist power. The American overlords, possessed of seemingly limitless wealth and power, a boundless arsenal of weapons of formidable horror, and dreams of technological push-button omnipotence, find themselves unable to subdue this small and weakly equipped nation of Vietnam.

You have engines big and burnished, tall beyond our fathers' ken.
We are only men, master. Have you heard of men?

The militarist rulers of the United States are still swimming in the atomaniac sea of illusions of world supremacy, such as Lord Alanbrooke in his war diaries so eloquently described as possessing Churchill in the moment of 1945 ('painted a wonderful picture of himself as the sole possessor of these bombs, and capable of dumping them where he wished, thus all-powerful'). Britain's rulers have long had their illusions pricked, though they still cling to a few tattered remnants. But the official United States has been passing through a phase more redolent of the climate of Britain's Boer War and Diamond Jubilee (also with a courageous popular minority protesting), with no experience in the modern era of war or even the dropping of a bomb on their own soil, but only of handing it out to others, and their rulers boasting of their 'manifest destiny' and 'world crusade' and inheritance from Britain of the role of 'world policeman' to lay down the law for lesser nations. They have not yet adapted themselves to the realities of the modern world. They still refuse to recognise China. They still reject the Soviet and Chinese proposals for

the destruction of all nuclear weapons or the pledge, accepted by the socialist countries, not to use nuclear weapons first.

Delirium Tremens of Escalation

Failure to win the Korean war ('the only war the United States has fought and not won' in the verdict of the U.S. staff chiefs) dealt the first blow to these illusions of omnipotence. Now the fiasco of the Vietnam adventure has brought a paroxysm of fury to all the ruling military circles and their bellicose political and press spokesmen. President Johnson has in practice carried out the electoral platform of Goldwater. With the gangster's belief that increasing violence and threats of violence must finally bring his victim to surrender, the terms of terror are raised again and again. Three years ago with a few thousand troops the generals boasted that, with the advance from an 'advisory' to an open combat role they were winning the war. Now with 200,000 they boast that they have 'stopped losing' it. Only the sheer logistic problem of pouring in such hordes into the country delays the rate of increase to the planned 600,000. When they began the bombing of North Vietnam a year ago they claimed that this would throttle the passage of supplies to the South and thus compel surrender. Now that they have resumed the bombing they complain that supplies increased during the previous bombing. Every device of terror and torture is attempted amid the plaudits of the jingo voices in the United States. Burn them with napalm. Destroy their homes and villages until there are now three-quarters of a million refugees from the bombed villages in the South. Poison their crops. The generals on the spot publicly threaten to bomb North Vietnam 'into the Stone Age'. When all these measures and threats fail to bring surrender, the yelps go out for more. Bomb Laos. Bomb Cambodia. Bomb Hanoi. Bomb Peking. Why not use the atom bomb?

Agonising Reappraisals

It is assuredly not humanity or squeamishness that has so far delayed these ultimate measures of escalating frenzy. But the dread question confronts even the generals of the Pentagon, even a General Westmoreland, even a McNamara, a Rusk and a Johnson: What will follow? If all these present measures of terror have not compelled submission, what can these further measures be expected to bring? Supposing, they may well ask themselves, we do bomb North Vietnam 'into the Stone Age', as we believe we have the power to do, what then? Will they love us the more for that? Will we have won

the war? Supposing we do drop the atom bomb, and thus waste our most valuable blackmailing weapon in an unprofitable area, what will we have gained save to turn the fury of the whole world against us? Already the anger of all the peoples of the world is rising against this war upon the Vietnam people. The anger of the American people is rising against a senseless war for which all the elaborate official explanations and lectures cannot give any meaning. And so even in U.S. ruling circles the voices of scepticism and criticism and demands for a change of course extend. The evidence of General Gavan or of Kennan before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. Seventy Congressmen. Twenty Senators. The experienced press voices of a Reston or a Lippmann. By no means friends of communism. By no means enemies of imperialism. But with some navigational sense of the morass into which American policy is being steered. So develops the crisis of United States policy over Vietnam, which is the expression of the heart of the crisis of the world today and of imperialism.

Honolulu Schizophrenia

In this dilemma President Johnson, torn between conflicting schools of advisers, accustomed only to slick domestic manipulations of congressional factions, and floundering in the midst of the deeper currents of the international issues involved in Vietnam, has only proved his strategic bankruptcy by his simultaneous declarations of uncompromising belligerency and 'peaceful' intentions. The *New York Times* commentator, James Reston, complained on February 9 that the President seemed to have 'no clear strategic policy', but was thrashing about

rejecting peace offensives and then trying them, stopping bombing and then starting bombing, rejecting the United Nations and then appealing to the United Nations, sending Vice-President Humphrey to brief Asian leaders on the Honolulu conference which he did not attend—all in an atmosphere of restless experimentation and self-righteous condemnation of anybody who differs with him.

So was evolved the characteristic Honolulu 'compromise' of the 'twofold' path, proclaiming simultaneously intensified military measures and the aim of a 'social revolution' (the words of the official declaration) in South Vietnam; pledging unalterable support to the Hitlerite military dictator, Marshal Ky, and simultaneously promising future undated 'democracy' for the people of South Vietnam; offering economic bribes to express concern for the 'welfare' of the

people of South Vietnam and simultaneously promising to extend the bombing of their homes. Truly the two faces of Uncle Sam. Biscuits and Bombs. Nappies and Napalm. 'Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears'.

Who Wants Peace?

But President Johnson sincerely wants peace, we are told. Has he not proclaimed it again and again? Has he not sent his peace missions all over the world? Has he not invoked the United Nations? Has he not called for the re-convening of the Geneva Conference? Has he not offered 'unconditional' negotiations? Mr. Wilson and Mr. Stewart are quick to take the cue. The fault for the continuance of the war in Vietnam, they repeat, lies, not with the United States, which wants peace, but with the Communists, with Hanoi, with Peking, who have refused the American offers. In the favourite phrase of Mr. Wilson, repeated again in the debate in parliament on February 8, 'the enemies of negotiation are the enemies of peace'. 'The American Government understandably felt that they had no option but to resume the bombing. We, having pressed for an extension of time, it placed an obligation on us when the bombing was resumed.' Those who objected to the bombing or called for peace in Vietnam should have sent their telegrams, not to Washington, but to Hanoi, to Ho Chi Minh, to Peking. Thus the responsibility for the war in Vietnam is squarely placed, not on the foreign invaders, but on the people who are attacked by the foreign invaders and who are so wicked as to defend themselves. A curious analysis. For if President Johnson really wanted peace in Vietnam, he could have it tomorrow by ceasing his invasion.

A Curious 'Peace Offensive'

But let us look a little closer at this 'peace offensive' of the United States. President Johnson did indeed send his 'peace missions' all over the world. Or nearly all over the world. With one notable exception. He sent them to every country where he was not fighting. But he sent no peace mission to the enemy he was fighting—the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. For the purposes of peace he refused to recognise their existence, although for the purposes of war all his forces are concentrated against them. It is elementary that every war can only end with a cease-fire between the opposing armies. No one else can do it for them. So it was with the first world war. So it was with the second world war. So the Korean war ended

with the armistice at Panmunjom. But President Johnson refuses to send his representatives to meet the enemy he is fighting even to discuss the possible terms of an armistice. His only language for them is the language of bombs. It is President Johnson who thereby bars the road to peace. No people has more reason to want peace and want peace passionately, than the Vietnam people, suffering unspeakable horrors and devastation from the foreign invasion and occupation of their country. But they want peace on the basis of the freedom of their country from the foreign invader and occupation—just as much as the British people would if there had been a Nazi invasion and military occupation of half of England under some Nazi Mosleyite gauleiter. Again and again in every public pronouncement they have made these simple terms for peace clear, as already promised them by the Geneva Agreements, which the United States first refused to sign, then promised to observe, and then tore up, thereby causing the war.

National Liberation Front

Why does the United States up to the present so obstinately refuse to negotiate with the enemy they are actually fighting, the National Liberation Front of the people of South Vietnam? President Johnson knows very well that the National Liberation Front in fact controls and administers four-fifths of the territory of South Vietnam. Even the Honolulu proposition for land reform in the fragments of South Vietnam controlled by the United States is only an attempt to imitate the land reform already carried out by the National Liberation Front in the rest of South Vietnam. He knows that his own Marshal Ky has publicly said that elections cannot at present be held in South Vietnam because 'the communists', that is, the National Liberation Front (in which the communists constitute about one third) would win. Why, then, if he wants peace does he refuse to negotiate with the enemy he is fighting, the National Liberation Front—all the more as he professes now to be ready to accept the Geneva Agreements, and this is precisely what the National Liberation Front is demanding? But to recognise the National Liberation Front as the representative of the people of South Vietnam would be to destroy the whole lie on which the American aggression is based. For the American invasion is based on the fiction that they had to come to the rescue of an 'ally', that is, the puppet military dictator imposed by themselves on the people of South Vietnam, against the 'aggression' of a 'foreign' State, North Vietnam.

Fighting the Geneva Agreements

The Vietnam people are a single nation with a long and proud history, and a civilisation many centuries older than the American. They have cast out successive invaders, the Japanese during the second world war, and the French (initially reinstated by the British military command at the end of the war to replace the united People's Democratic Republic of President Ho Chi Minh by a colonial restoration), and are now engaged in casting out the American invaders. The Geneva Agreements after the defeat of the French explicitly laid down that the temporary demarcation of the country at the moment must on no account be treated as a division into two States; that no foreign military personnel or bases should be allowed in either; and that within two years peaceful reunification should take place through free elections. The United States and the puppet military dictator installed by them in South Vietnam refused to permit the peaceful free elections for reunification, since they knew that this would mean the end of their occupation and puppet military dictator.* Consequently, when the people of South Vietnam finally revolted against the foreign-maintained military dictator, the American command had to invent the fiction that it was an 'aggression' by North Vietnam. From this have followed all the subsequent gymnastic contortions of their successive alternative treatments of the National Liberation Front: (1) the initial position, still proclaimed by Marshal Ky, that they will never recognise or negotiate with the National Liberation Front; (2) the second position, suggested in the Fourteen Points promulgated in December, to permit inclusion of 'the Vietcong' in the North Vietnam delegation—that is, to demand acceptance of the fiction that the National Liberation Front is a subordinate agent of North Vietnam; (3) the position most recently put forward by Harriman in a televised interview on February 5 that the National Liberation Front might be admitted as an 'independent group' alongside the official government delegation of Marshal Ky—much as if in a Nazi-occupied England the national resistance movement led by a Churchill were to be offered a subordinate position as an 'independent group' alongside the Nazi-installed gauleiter. All these are typical insolent demands reflecting the refusal to face facts. In the end, if there are to be negotiations,

* 'I have never talked or corresponded with a person knowledgeable in Indochinese affairs who did not agree that had elections been held at the time of the fighting, possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader rather than Chief of State Bao Dai'. Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'Mandate for Change'.

the National Liberation Front will have to be recognised as the representative of the people of South Vietnam.

'Unconditional' Conditions

But what kind of negotiations? Here we come to the second key question no less important than the recognition of the National Liberation Front. President Johnson has repeatedly claimed to offer 'unconditional' negotiations. *The Times* Washington correspondent on November 18, 1965, exposed this fiction when he reported from official sources that there were at least two conditions:

The first is that political recognition of the National Liberation Front as part of a final settlement is unacceptable. The second is that it cannot be permitted to retain a territorial base similar to that given to the Pathet Lao in Laos. These conditions, it was learned today, are not open to negotiation. The Administration is not prepared to negotiate without their prior acceptance. A possible future situation in which the National Liberation Front could take part in a coalition with non-communist parties is not acceptable.

And again on December 31:

In spite of the attraction of unconditional negotiations or discussions the fundamental American interest has to be protected. This has been boiled down by high officials to a blank refusal to accept the National Liberation Front as a political force under any name in a pacified South Vietnam. One said earlier in the week that this is what the war is all about. Unconditional discussions, therefore, turn on this condition, and almost certainly make further fighting inevitable.

So much for the lie of 'unconditional' negotiations. The widely publicised Fourteen Points, promulgated on December 28 from no named source as a supposed American offer, and holding out the most cagily worded vague suggestions of 'acceptance' of the Geneva Agreements as 'a good enough basis for negotiations' (not as a signed agreement to be carried out), or promising that the United States does not intend to maintain a permanent 'continuing' military occupation of South Vietnam (how long is 'not continuing'?), are thus only the loose cover for the real war aim to maintain South Vietnam as an American dependency whether under direct American military occupation or under an American-maintained and controlled satellite regime. This is what the war is about.

'Negotiations' to Repudiate Negotiated Agreements

Why, then, the continual pressure for 'negotiations' alongside the actual intensification of the war? Is this simply a propaganda device or smokescreen to appease international or domestic opinion? That aspect exists; but the real objective is much more specific and serious

than that. Of course there is the obvious calculation that the simple-hearted, wherever there is a war, will always acclaim any suggestion for negotiations ('jaw is better than war'), even if this means leaving the armed invader in possession of his occupied territory. The answer to this argument of innocent pacifist opinion, repeated to the point of nausea by the far from innocent Mr. Wilson and Mr. Stewart, 'Why not negotiations?' is very simple. There have already been negotiations. The negotiations and international conference took place at Geneva in 1954. A negotiated agreement was reached, guaranteeing the evacuation of foreign military personnel and peaceful reunification. Britain's signature is on the accords reached. *The task now is to fulfil the already negotiated agreement.* Unless this is done, what confidence can there be in any future negotiations? The leadership of the Vietnam people in North Vietnam placed their confidence in the Geneva Agreements. Are they to be deceived again? This time they demand fulfilment. North Vietnam scrupulously fulfilled the Geneva agreements from their side until the open rejection by the United States and its puppet dictator in South Vietnam, refusal of elections and peaceful reunification, and increasing military build-up finally compelled the sending of supplies to their fellow-nationals in the South. The demand for new negotiations, re-convening the Geneva Conference, reference to the United Nations and the like, without any prior condition of fulfilment of the agreements already reached, is equivalent to demanding the cancellation of the existing Geneva agreements. In other words, it becomes a demand to legalise the United States military invasion and violation of the Geneva agreements.

'Sincerity' for Peace

But President Johnson, his apologists urge, is 'sincere' in his desire for peace. 'I am convinced of the sincerity of the President', proclaimed Mr. Wilson in the parliamentary debate on February 8. Or course he is. Most assuredly he wants peace—provided he can remain in possession of the spoils. The burglar, caught by the irate householder, would undoubtedly prefer to be left unmolested in possession of his loot. Mr. Middle-of-the-Road Wilson would urge in his reasonable way that there should be more spirit of compromise on both sides: say, perhaps, half the loot for the burglar. Certainly President Johnson would like the fruits of war without the further costs of war which is proving an intolerable drain and which he does not know how to win. Hitler also, once his armies had occupied

Europe and established his puppet rulers and police terror, proclaimed his desire for peace for his 'New Order in Europe', denounced the resistance movements of the occupied countries as bandits and terrorists and communists and communist-inspired, and demanded that they lay down their arms and surrender, failing which ever increasing terror would have to be used against them. But the resistance movements refused to lay down their arms and surrender so long as there was foreign occupation of their countries. And they were right. In the end it was Hitler who had to go. And in the end it will be the United States which will have to depart from Vietnam.

'Domino' Theory

Hence behind all the talk of 'peace offensives' and 'unconditional negotiations' the reality is the extension and intensification of the American war of aggression in South-East Asia.

At his press conference on Friday (February 11) President Johnson said that he did not want further to escalate the war. But in the same breath he confirmed that additional American troops would be sent out (*The Guardian*, February 14, 1966).

The offensive is extended to Laos. It is extended to Cambodia. 16,000 American troops are already in Thailand. The aggressive military circles clamour for action against China. All this is presented in accordance with the so-called 'domino' theory of the American imperialists. Finding it difficult to persuade the peaceful majority of the American public that the United States is in life-and-death danger from the terrible Vietnam people of thirty million, and that therefore it is a matter of vital 'national security' for the United States to send about half a million troops thousands of miles across the ocean to invade little Vietnam, they produce the 'domino' theory to justify their action. According to this theory every place in the world is eventually connected with every other place, so that if the U.S. military forces, extended in scores of bases in every continent all over the world, should anywhere be threatened by the resistance of the people, then it becomes a vital question of 'national defence' of the United States to crush that resistance, because otherwise the resistance of the peoples might spread and spread until finally it engulfs the United States. To make this theory more plausible, since it is difficult to present the little nations of South-East Asia as a manifest menace to the United States, the familiar red spectre has to be invoked, as has been done for half a century to cover every expansionist aggression of imperialism; and in the present case China

is cast for this role as the malevolent communist power plotting world domination.

China and Imperialism

It is in this context that the Western imperialists calculate to take advantage of the present controversies and sharp issues within the international communist movement, and especially of some of the recent statements of the Chinese communist leadership and the conflicts between them and the majority of communist parties, to find a happy hunting ground in order to further their own aggressive and counter-revolutionary aims. A clear note of warning needs here to be sounded. Undoubtedly a number of the recent statements and trends expressed at the moment by the Chinese communist leadership have given serious concern and grounds for criticism among most communists. In particular, extreme anti-Soviet denunciations and slanders, of a type long familiar from a different camp, and in language and content repeating lines we were fighting (Lenin's 'restoration of capitalism' in Soviet Russia; Lenin's 'alliance with German imperialism', etc.) before there was a Chinese Communist Party, coming now from the leadership of a major socialist country and Communist Party are no service to international communist solidarity. These are grave matters which will have to be cleared within the international communist movement. But before the imperialists try to exploit these divisions for their purposes, let the facts in relation to imperialism and China, recognised by all communists and progressive people irrespective of controversies, be firmly and unequivocally stated.

Aggression in Eastern Asia

It is not China which is committing aggression against the United States. It is the United States which is committing aggression against China. It is not China which is threatening to invade the United States. It is the United States which has invaded and is still occupying Chinese territory in Taiwan. It is the United States which denies China's international rights. It is the United States which surrounds the coasts of China with the most gigantic armada and panoply of nuclear power, such that, if one tenth as much were deployed against the shores of the United States, it would cause apoplexy in the Pentagon and demands for instant war (witness the experience with the missile sites in Cuba). It is the United States which, in the seventeenth year after the victory of the revolution, still maintains a state of war with

China by refusal of recognition, and openly proclaims the aim, whenever opportunity offers, to invade the mainland in order to overthrow the socialist regime by force. All the detail aggressions of the United States in Eastern Asia are part of this total aggression. This is the menace of aggression in the Far East. To defeat this aggression is the common interest of all communists, socialists and supporters of peace. Therefore it is the more important in the present critical moment to defeat the American extending aggression in South-East Asia.

Britain's Responsibility

Nowhere is the responsibility to contribute to this common task more immediate and urgent than here in Britain. Peace in Vietnam can and will be won so soon as the heroic struggle of the Vietnam people is strongly enough backed by the support of all the peoples of the world, and especially in the United States and Britain, to compel the United States Government to end its aggression. Britain's signature is on the Geneva agreements, which forbid foreign troops in Vietnam North or South. Defence Minister Healey proclaimed in a recent broadcast: 'Britain's word is her bond'. He was justifying Britain's colonialist war in Southern Arabia on the grounds of a treaty with a puppet regime of stooge sultans. What of Vietnam? What of Britain's duty as co-Chairman to condemn the tearing up of the Geneva agreements by the American invasion of Vietnam? On the contrary, there is not merely support, but direct complicity. Stewart and Healey were in Washington on January 27; on January 31 the bombing of North Vietnam was resumed, and the British Government's statement of approval followed almost within minutes. It is indeed shameful that a Labour Government should come out as the main supporter of the international illegal crime of bombing North Vietnam, at a moment when even non-labour government heads like de Gaulle of France or the Premier of Canada publicly condemn it. It is Britain's support which is saving the United States from isolation and is proving its main prop in the international arena for the conduct of this criminal war. To change this shameful situation is the urgent responsibility which falls on all of us, on the whole labour movement and the people of this country, not only in the interests of the cruelly assaulted Vietnam people and of peace in South-East Asia, but of the whole future of the British people and of world peace.

R.P.D.

RAIL CRISIS—WHAT NEXT?

Jock Nicolson*

AT one o'clock Saturday morning, February 12, the national railway strike due to start on February 14, was called off by the tiny majority of 13 votes to 10 on the Executive Committee of the National Union of Railwaymen. Such was the narrowness of the margin that gave the Government a dubious 'victory' in this first major battle for its Incomes Policy.

The strike decision taken by the NUR on January 19 and the series of dramatic meetings right up to the confrontation with the Cabinet yesterday has produced a number of gains over the original 'package deal' offered by the British Railways Board on August 20. First, the 3 per cent offered for October 1966 will now become $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and will take effect from September. Second, the one additional day added to the existing two weeks summer holidays will become three extra days. Third, the forty-hour week will come into operation at the end of February instead of April. Fourth, the Government will put an unspecified sum into the Pensions Fund and pensions will be improved. Fifth, there is to be an investigation into the wages structure to take into account the lower-paid man. Sixth, the Government was compelled to move a little from the declaration of the Prices and Incomes Board, dismissing the Guillebaud principle, and make a special statement that 'comparability' was a factor in determining railway wages.

Along with the improvements listed above, and additional to the unspecified sum that the Exchequer will put in the Pensions Fund, the cash won by the negotiations is estimated to total an additional £28.3 million this year. This will be £5 million more than the cash value of the offer made by the British Railways Board on August 20.

The other side of the picture is the alarming implications of the PIB report. It is a devastating document. It combines within its covers all the reactionary Tory ideas about the role of the trade unions; their ideas on wages and on transport policy; and spells out in detail how they should be applied to the railway industry. It undermines many of the major achievements which have been won by the Rail Unions in decades of struggle and negotiations. It is so shattering that even the ultra-moderate Mr. Sidney Greene

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argues that not one single senior member of the Government has given it forthright public approval.

It may be that the Prime Minister and his colleagues are far too clever to commit themselves in words to a document that so closely approximates to Tory Party policy, but this has not prevented them from ruthlessly marshalling all the power of the State to impose it on the railwaymen. The only challenge and modification to the PIB Report came from the NUR strike threat. The PIB Report dismissed the Cameron Report of 1954 ('the nation having willed the end must will the means'), and the Guillebaud Report of 1960 (railway wages should compare with wages in other industries). It argues that it is not basic wages that should be compared; but earnings, including overtime, bonuses, incentive payments, and premium payments for shift work should all be lumped together. It resurrects the old bogey of the railway deficit against improving wages.

Its proposals would undermine the present system of nationally negotiated rates of pay and conditions of service. It poses instead of the existing negotiating machinery 'Pay and Productivity Councils' by which collective bargaining as we know it would cease, and the only basis for improvements would come from savings from staff reductions and the elimination of so-called restrictive practices. Increased pensions would have to be offset against wages or other improvement. It takes a swipe at the public service aspect of transport and recommends that 'the Government should instruct the Railways Board to act commercially'.

These and other retrograde proposals in the PIB Report have been pushed into the background by the to-ing and fro-ing between the Cabinet and the NUR Headquarters. They are the issues we now have to face in the railway industry.

The decision to call off the strike on the basis of the very limited concessions won will leave us with many very difficult problems. It is certain that the Railways Board will push ahead to implement the PIB proposals. This will probably mean that many issues will come up on a departmental, sectional or depot basis. There could be a tendency to 'fragmentation'. At the same time as we defend ourselves as best we can at local level, we will have to patiently work for greater unity within the industry.

It is also likely that the initial reaction of a section of the membership will be frustration and futility. Even before the present crisis on wages, there was a growing bitterness among railwaymen at the failure of the Labour Government to implement its election pledge

to stop the closures. This was expressed by a number of Branches demanding that the NUR should disaffiliate from the Labour Party. This is a negative reaction, but the role played by the Government in the wage crisis is likely to strengthen that tendency. One of our biggest tasks will be to show railwaymen that instead of turning their back on the labour movement, they need to step up the fight to win the movement for a turn of policy to the left. What we have just witnessed on the railways is simply the unfolding of some aspects of the Government's move to the right.

The important capitalist papers drew two main conclusions from the rail crisis. Some have commended Wilson for standing firm contrary to previous Tory Governments who twice surrendered to NUR 'Brinkmanship' (*The Guardian*). The Labour Government has been successful in doing what a Tory Government feared, lest they would thereby provoke major industrial unrest. But when capitalism wins one victory it whets its appetite for more. 'The railwaymen were the first; they will probably not be the last' (*Financial Times*, February 12). 'The idea was to restrain a few wage claims—the railwaymen's claim was certainly among them—in order to discourage the others' (*Daily Telegraph*).

The treachery of the Government must be apparent now to a much wider section of the movement. One of their main arguments to get their Incomes Policy accepted by the Labour Party Conference and Trades Union Congress was that it would benefit the lower-paid workers. In fact the NUR voted for it at both these bodies. They agreed to their claim going before the PIB under paragraph 15, as a 'special case' that would not come within the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent limit.

There is little reason to doubt that the lesson has been learned by the NUR and the entire trade union movement. But the great danger is that the Government will now go ahead with legislation to impose some form of compulsion on the unions. Here again it is important that the correct political conclusion is drawn. Trade union MPs and left-Labour MPs, by keeping quiet, have allowed the Government to do serious damage to the movement. If they do not speak up there is a serious danger that the Labour Party will cease to be the major political wing of the trade unions and drift towards the position similar to the American Democratic Party. This is the conscious expressed aim of a section of the right wing. That move to the right has now been achieved by the Social Democratic Party in West Germany.

Finally, anyone who has been close to the events in the NUR during

these past weeks cannot but have been greatly moved by the courage and steadfastness of the hard core of the Executive Committee who in face of almost unimaginable pressure, stood firm right to the end. That some of these magnificent men are prevented from playing a bigger role in the labour movement because of bans and proscriptions is a tragedy for the movement. The left needs them just as they need the left. The sooner the bans are ended, the healthier the movement will be.

LABOUR MONTHLY

FORTY YEARS AGO

A. J. COOK ON THE COAL CRISIS

The mining industry is the key to the economic position of Great Britain. In the period of progressive development of British capitalism, the miners were in the vanguard of the working-class movement, building up a national industrial trade union organisation and leading the way in the struggle for better conditions and workers' control of industry. In the present period of capitalist decline the miners once again occupy the key position, but in a different way. They are now the most exposed to the capitalist attack, bearing the brunt of the attempt of capitalism to re-establish itself at the expense of the workers. . . . The mine owners' attack is directed not merely against the miners alone, but against the whole working class. Indeed, it will be remembered that at the Coal Commission the owners actually proposed that a reduction in railway and dock charges should be obtained through drastic reductions in the wages of railwaymen and dock workers. The mine owners' blunt demand for the practical destruction of the National Miners' Federation, for lower wages and longer hours, is the same demand, only put in the crudest and cruellest terms, that capitalism is making to the workers of every industry. . . . A united defence of the workers to the challenge of capitalism must and will be given. But for a solution of the problems of the industry a bold plan is needed and not mere tinkering. Such a plan has been put forward by the miners, and, indeed, it has been widely remarked that the sole constructive proposals for the restoration of the industry have come from the miners.

(From 'The Coal Crisis and the Way Out', A. J. Cook, National Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain, *Labour Monthly*, March, 1926.)

HAVANA CONFERENCE

Cheddi Jagan

THE First Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America was held in Havana from January 3 to 15. Participating in this epoch-making Conference were 512 delegates from 82 countries, as well as 64 observers and 77 guests. The Tri-Continental Conference marked a new stage in the struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. It met against a background where firstly, the gap in living standards between the imperialist countries and the subjugated poor countries is widening, and secondly, the imperialist states are using with increasing intensity force and fraud to resist change and to maintain the status quo—the system of colonialist and neo-colonialist exploitation: in British Guiana, by a ‘rigged constitutional arrangement’ the People’s Progressive Party was removed from office; in Brazil, election victories won by Jascelino Kubitschek’s Radical Party were cancelled and all political parties banned; in the Dominican Republic, U.S. air-borne troops landed when the ‘constitutionalist’ revolutionaries were about to put back in the presidency Funa Bosch, who was deposed only six months after winning a 62 per cent electoral victory.

In Vietnam, for fear that Ho Chi Minh would win an election, the U.S. Government has acted with massive force, spreading terror and committing unspeakable crimes against the Vietnamese people. Now that the ballot box does not produce results to the liking of the imperialists, they are prepared to dispense with the pretence and sham of constitutionalism and resort to naked force. Although President Johnson won a land-slide victory on a Peace Ticket, his administration has dishonoured the Geneva Agreements and abandoned free and fair elections, for the massacre of the defenceless Vietnam civilian population, the destruction of whole villages, and the bombing of hospitals, schools, cultural institutions, markets, hydro-electric stations and dams, industrial and economic centres.

In the face of these criminal acts, the General Political Resolution noted that the common enemy of all peoples is international imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism. The General Declaration stated that the Conference proclaimed the inalienable right of all peoples to full independence, and to all means of struggle to achieve that right, including armed struggle. The language of one delegate

after another was clear and emphatic. Gabriel Yumbu, Secretary to the Congo Revolutionary Council, declared that 'the struggle cannot end until U.S. imperialism is ousted from our country'. The General Conference Declaration therefore proclaimed 'the right of the peoples to counter imperialist force with revolutionary force to protect national sovereignty and independence'.

For the imperialists who had launched a campaign, including the kidnapping and murder of Ben Barka, to sabotage the Conference, the outcome was a grave disappointment. Their anticipation of a rift between China and the Soviet Union did not materialise.

The delegates had, above all, a clear-cut objective—how in the face of a ruthless and immoral enemy to unite all the progressive forces for simultaneous confrontation. Sharaf Rashidov, the head of the Soviet delegation, expressed the Soviet position without ambiguity. He declared: 'There should be no place for colonialism on earth, it should be completely wiped off the face of the earth, once and for all. Sacred is the right of the peoples to fight for the complete destruction of colonialism and neo-colonialism using all means at their disposal. . . . We believe that relations between sovereign states with different social structures should be based on peaceful coexistence. However, it is quite clear that there can be no peaceful coexistence between the oppressed peoples and their oppressors—the colonialists and the imperialists, between the imperialist aggressors and their victims.'

Rashidov then went on to say that the Soviet Union was supplying the most modern weapons to the people of Vietnam to enable them to repulse U.S. aggression. The ruthlessness of U.S. intervention in Vietnam made not only the 'language of the rifle' a central theme of the Conference, but also the Vietnamese question a major issue. The struggle of the people of Vietnam was recognised as 'an integral part of the struggle of the peoples all over the world for their fundamental objectives at the present stage of history; that is to say, national liberation, socialism and the safeguarding of world peace'. The Vietnamese people's struggle was hailed as a direct support and powerful contribution to the national liberation movements, and a 'brilliant and encouraging example and a stimulus to all progressive peoples of the world'.

In recognition of the heroic contribution of the Vietnamese people, a Committee of Aid was created to help the struggle against U.S. aggression, and an appeal was made to organise a week of

solidarity from March 12 to 19, 1966. The conference noted the unity of interest of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the working class and popular movements of Europe and North America. It called for the strengthening of their solidarity in the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle and particularly singled out for praise the growing popular movement in the United States against U.S. aggression in Vietnam. 'Our struggle is the same', said the General Declaration, 'and we have a common enemy. The liberation of Africa, Asia and Latin America will accelerate the emancipation of the oppressed classes in capitalist countries.'

The Conference saw in racial discrimination 'an instrument of exploitation and one of the most unjust and barbarian forms of inequality'. It waged a struggle against all manifestations of racialism and discrimination. It declared its full support for the struggle of the people of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) against the racist government of Ian Smith and called for a political and trade blockade of South Africa.

The Conference underlined the inter-relationship between national liberation and social revolution. It noted that there is increasing consciousness that 'mere formal sovereignty is inadequate to ensure complete liberation . . . Besides political emancipation, it is necessary to achieve economic emancipation.'

Realising that so-called 'third-world' countries are poor and are getting poorer because of foreign economic domination and subjugation, imbalanced economies, vast outflow of profits and dividends, loss of traditional markets, buying dear and selling cheap, the Conference outlined a positive programme for the eradication of all vestiges of imperialist economic rule. It proclaimed the following:

The right of national control of basic natural resources, nationalisation of banks and vital enterprises, state control over foreign trade and currency, a broadening of the public sector, a revision of the anti-national and unlawful liabilities imposed on their economies and the rejection of them, the right to implement a truly agrarian reform capable of putting an end to feudal and semi-feudal ownership, of promoting agriculture, improving the living standards of peasants and agricultural workers and also of promoting the national economy and increasing exports.

Finally, the conference put on record its debt of gratitude to the people of the socialist countries, who 'succeeded in abolishing the exploitation of man by man by the establishment of socialism, give with their example and aid a valuable impulse to the struggle of the peoples oppressed by imperialism'.

By electing a Committee for Assistance and Aid to National Liberation Movements, cognisance has been taken of the fact that the U.S. imperialists have intervened, subverted and destroyed progressive movements and governments with propaganda, arms and money. That both China and the Soviet Union are members of this committee is not without significance.

The establishment of a tri-continental organisation with provisional headquarters in Havana, Cuba, and a continental (Latin American) organisation was a stunning blow to U.S. imperialism. Cuba represents for the national liberation movements two symbols. Firstly, the symbol of a small country successfully confronting the giant colossus of the north and exploding the illusion and myth of U.S. omnipotence and invincibility. Secondly, a symbol of ideological unity. The Cuban Revolution encompasses in a brief period revolutionary nationalism, socialism and communism. For national liberation movements, this symbol of ideological unity is vital, for one of the major weapons used by the imperialists to split working class, popular, and national liberation movements is anti-communism.

By selecting Havana as the provisional capital, the peoples of the three continents have given recognition to the Cuban Revolution and the heroic Cuban people led by Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party. At the same time, the humble, poor and down-trodden of the world have given their clear message: we have had enough. We will no longer be divided and ruled. We will no longer be fooled and exploited. Down with colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism.

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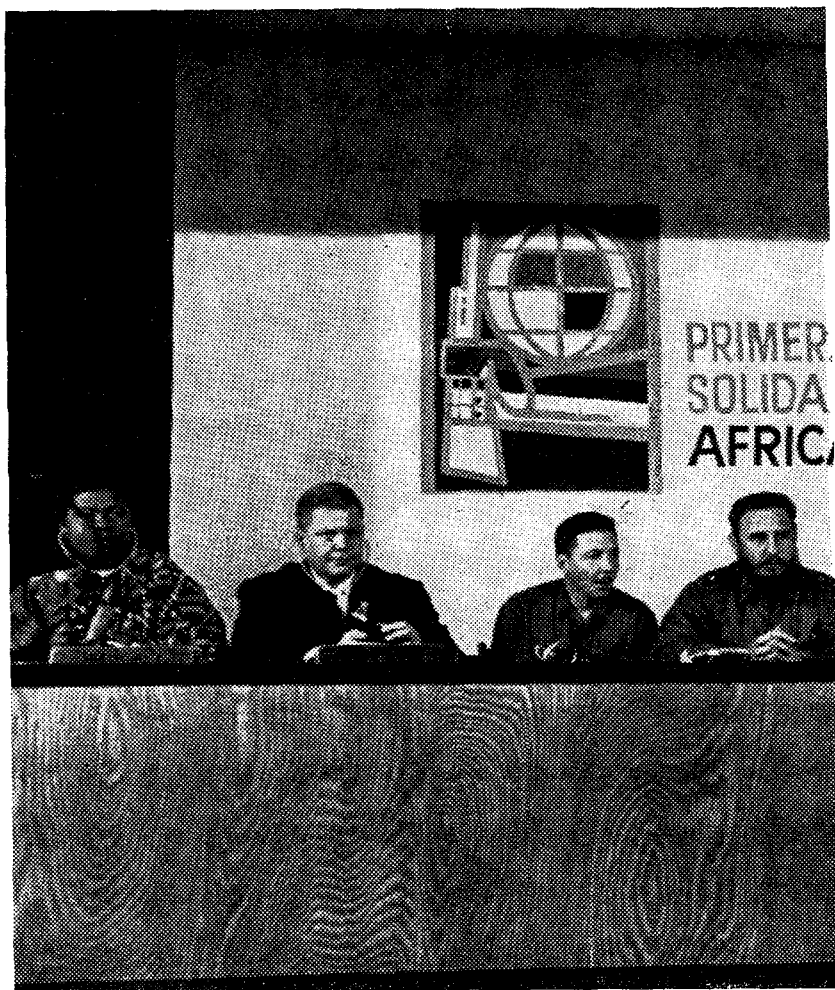
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THE TASHKENT AGREEMENT

Dilip Bose*

For many decades the main boast of British rule in India had been its unification of India. At the end of two centuries of British rule the India which had been united under Asoka and Chandragupta over two thousand years ago and under Akbar three and a half centuries ago was handed back to subordinate Indian rulers, split into discordant fragments, and needing to tread a toilsome and painful path to overcome this vicious legacy of imperialist 'divide and rule'.—Thus commented R. Palme Dutt in *Labour Monthly*, August, 1947, along with welcoming the two newly independent Dominions of India and Pakistan.

THE path of future development for India and Pakistan lay in different directions. India's first steps against the Anglo-American imperialist machinations in world politics were at first hesitant. But along with the emergent Arab states, India formed an Arab-Asian bloc in the United Nations, and later in 1949 with People's China breaking the bonds of imperialism over the biggest population and land mass of Asia, India took more and more a definite stand away from the camp of imperialism and adopted a friendly attitude towards the world socialist camp of peace and national independence.

Imperialism sought to retain its pockets and bases in the Asian mainland through Singapore and Malaya and particularly by inducing Pakistan to join Seato and Cento. Later, precisely at the time the Pansheel Treaty of Friendship and Non-interference was signed between India and People's China in June 1954, a US-Pakistan Military Assistance Pact was signed in July 1954 as a counterblast.

The present area of Pakistan (with the sole exception of the eastern Pakistan, i.e. the old East Bengal) has been traditionally the backward regions of the old national movement with no industries and consequently weak working class or democratic traditions. Being predominantly feudal, in some cases also of tribal character, Pakistan could form easy ties with imperialism.

Indo-Pakistan Relations

The relations between the two countries have been uneasy ever

* Dilip Bose will be well known to many of our readers for his activities while in Britain in the Indian Student Movement and for his previous contributions to *Labour Monthly* in 1951 and 1952. He is now active in the political life of India.

since their birth. And imperialism saw to it that the knotty problem of Kashmir, itself a legacy of the old imperialist rule, remains always a bone of contention between the two. For, be it noted that it was the Mountbatten Award with the right given to the Indian principalities to opt out or join either Dominion that created many problems, the Kashmir one being foremost of them.

When the tribal invasions of Kashmir took place in October, 1947, after Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union, British imperialism supplied arms, ammunition and even officers to both the sides to keep the fire burning. As the *Manchester Guardian* had to note on August 3, 1948:

Pakistan's official participation in the Kashmir campaign raises serious problems for the whole British commonwealth. This is the first time the armies of the two Dominions have fought against each other. . . . Moreover, the fact that both the Pakistan and Indian armies have British Commanders-in-Chief and British advisers, while the former has several hundred British officers as compared with the latter's few score, means in effect that Britons are ranged on opposing sides. (Quoted by R. Palme Dutt in 'India Today & Tomorrow', Indian edition, pp. 267-68.)

Indeed a classic instance of divide et impera!

In 1965, first over the territory of the Rann of Kutch at the outer fringe of the Rajasthan desert near the West Pakistan border, later over Kashmir proper, armed conflicts developed. The U.N. Security Council resolution, followed by U Thant's visit to the Indian sub-continent sought to make effective an immediate ceasefire with the withdrawal of respective armies to the pre-August 5 position. The Anglo-American draft was a clever manipulation to raise anew the issue of accession of Kashmir to India as a point of dispute—a position totally unacceptable to India. It was, therefore, rejected though the ceasefire was accepted. Naturally the somewhat forced acceptance of the ceasefire with all the major issues kept in suspense made even the ceasefire itself very precarious.

Meeting at Tashkent

The Soviet Union invited both India and Pakistan to meet at Tashkent. The choice of the place has a certain significance. India has a long historic contact with Tashkent, Samarkhand, Bokhara, and other central Asian towns and Babur who founded the Mogul dynasty, which ruled India for four centuries till it was taken by British East India Company, came from Ferghana very near Tashkent. It is a happy augury for the future that the Indian sub-continent

is reforging its age-old historic links with Asia (it was the intervening two hundred years of British rule that sundered it and made us look at the world through London) across the Himalayas and with the Socialist Soviet Union, a staunch anti-imperialist power and friend of India and Pakistan.

The great merit of the Tashkent Declaration lies precisely in the fact that the three crucial points at issue—ceasefire, withdrawal to pre-August 5 position and Kashmir—were put separately and independent of one another. The acceptance of the first two was by no means a condition precedent for accepting the third, i.e. the Kashmir dispute. Thus the Gordian knot was cut and as the world knows, the Soviet Union played a big part in the operation without for a moment throwing its weight about as a Big Power.

The way the Kashmir problem is posed in the document is worth quoting:

They considered that the interests of peace in their region and particularly in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and, indeed, the interests of the peoples of India and Pakistan were not served by the continuance of tension between the two countries. It was against this background that Jammu and Kashmir were discussed, and each of the sides set forth its respective position.

The Tashkent Document also declares unequivocally to settle all disputes between India and Pakistan through means of peaceful negotiations and not to resort to arms, to stop all 'propaganda directed against the other country' and to 'encourage propaganda which promotes the development of friendly relations between the two countries' and further to 'continue meetings both at the highest and at other levels on matters of direct concern to both countries'.

The Tashkent Declaration is a triumph of Soviet diplomacy, as also an expression of a sincere desire on the part of the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan never again to resort to arms. This is as much evident in the Declaration itself as in the patient and persuasive manner of carrying on the talks even when it sometimes tended to collapse. The Declaration concludes by appreciating the role of the Soviet Government in the talks:

The Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan record their feelings of deep appreciation and gratitude to the leaders of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government and personally to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for their constructive, friendly and noble part in bringing about the present meeting which has resulted in mutually satisfactory results. . . They invite the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR to witness this declaration.

There is an element of Greek tragedy in Prime Minister Shastri meeting his death at the moment of his triumph. But he has left behind a genuine Tashkent spirit which now prevails over the Indian sub-continent. The gradual withdrawal of the respective armies to pre-August 5 position is being effected with friendly bonhomie, though there have been discordant voices in both India and Pakistan. The extreme Hindu communal right-wing forces have called Tashkent a surrender. Similar forces are arraigned in Pakistan also. To implement Tashkent is a process of struggle for which, it must be said, the new Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and other government leaders, as also President Ayub Khan have shown cool courage against their respective right-wing reactionary forces. Forces of peace have proved once again stronger than those of war.

Food Crisis in India

India was already in the throes of a food crisis when the Indo-Pakistani war broke out and continued for about three weeks. It naturally helped to aggravate it further.

In 1965 our foodgrains production happened to be the highest ever—88.7 million tons, yet this was considered a crisis year. This is because corrupt practice and black-marketing in foodgrains are widespread, even though some efforts are being made by the government to curb and stop them and rationing has been introduced in the major towns. In 1966 there is a crop failure—the estimated production of foodgrains is around 78 million tons.

The PL 480 aid from the United States of America, of course, demands its pound of flesh—a change in India's present foreign policy towards the Anglo-American bloc. That way surely lies the ultimate scrapping of our national sovereignty.

If Pakistan today, after its abject dependence for so long on the USA is seeking to grope its way towards a new understanding with the socialist world, it will be ironical if India were now to go over to the US camp. A permanent solution of the food crisis in India is not possible without drastic land reforms and improved methods of irrigation, manure and such other measures. Starting from 164 tractors in 1957, the present number of Soviet tractors working on Indian fields in various parts of the country totals more than 12,000, but this is only a beginning.

Already the volume of Indo-Soviet trade is growing rapidly. When the first trade agreement was signed between India and the Soviet Union, thirteen years ago, it was a mere 9 million rupees. By 1964

it reached an over-all figure of Rs 1,850 million. It is estimated that in 1965 the trade turnover between India and the USSR reached Rs 2,650 million approximately. Apart from the growing volume, the nature of the trade with the USSR, Czechoslovakia and other countries should be particularly noted. The main categories of import from the USSR consist of machinery and equipment as well as other capital goods, most essential for building India's economy. At present, various construction projects and enterprises in India have nearly 1,500 Soviet metal-cutting machine tools, about 2,000 electric welding machines, more than 150 cranes and bulldozers and also 70 super-powerful excavators.

And all this trade is on a barter basis on payment in rupees, thereby enabling us to save much by way of sore-needed foreign exchange. It is common knowledge that our foreign exchange crisis is to a large extent due to the underpricing of our raw material exports to, and also overpricing of the finished products from Britain, which we have had to import. In other words, the old unequal and unfair basis on which British imperialism used to trade with colonial India still persists.

This must stop. We demand the extension of the same kind of equal trade relationship with Britain as we enjoy with the socialist Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries. It is also very much in the interest of the British public to reciprocate this demand.

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PRESS PROBLEMS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Allen Hutt*

THIS year is likely to prove of special importance for the Press problems that confront the labour movement. I need only mention the *Daily Worker's* plan to expand to a six-page issue every day; the continuing crisis of the *Sunday Citizen*; the proposal to launch as a privately-promoted co-operative venture, a new left-of-centre Labour morning paper to be called *The News*; the encouraging fact that in July *Labour Monthly* celebrates the 45th Anniversary of its continuous publication as an independent, and self-supporting, Marxist journal. As one who has spent his entire professional journalistic career, since joining the old *Daily Herald* in 1923, on newspapers of one or other tendency in the movement, I am specially interested in the possible outcome of 1966 for the Press of what we may broadly call the Left.

The *Daily Herald* which was unceremoniously slaughtered by IPC boss Cecil King in 1964 was far removed from the *Herald* on which I spent my 'prentice days; indeed, the 1929-30 deal with Odhams—since 1961 part of the King empire—really put paid to the *Herald* as a genuine organ of the labour movement. Nevertheless, I think there can be no doubt that the *Herald's* death, and the advertising-agency induced birth of the *Sun*, produced a considerable malaise among substantial sections of the movement. This malaise was reflected in a number of moves, all abortive, to set up a new Labour daily, reviving (at least according to the hopes of some promoters) the *Daily Herald* title.

Undoubtedly this sentiment is responsible for whatever trade union support the formation of the Labour Press Co-operative Society, prospective publishers of *The News*, has attracted. But my own view is that this move will prove no more than symptomatic. I do not see an individually-inspired venture of this sort, however much it has taken a leaf out of the *Daily Worker's* book with its paper-owned-by-its-readers slogan, getting very far. I note that an initial publication date of May this year has now been put off to October. National daily newspaper production is not only very

* Mr. Hutt, as our readers may be aware, is a senior member of the NEC of the National Union of Journalists, and has for many years edited the NUJ official organ, *The Journalist*.

expensive, it requires the most careful advance preparation, on both the editorial and management sides. This cannot be done from scratch in a matter of months.

The basic problem facing the labour movement in respect of its Press is how to make that Press viable. To approach this problem on the basis of purely capitalist criteria, that is to say from the standpoint of attracting enough display advertising to bridge the gap between income and expenditure, is to invite defeat. The vagaries and prejudices of monopolistic advertising nowadays are such that Mr. King himself can say that a daily paper with a circulation of 1,250,000 is no longer an economic proposition. How then can a socialist paper be an economic proposition? The answer certainly does not lie in the attraction of national display advertising. The more dispersed, more individual, classified advertising may be developed; the current advertising boom in local daily and weekly papers is largely the great expansion of the 'smalls'. As it happens, this was the type of advertising which, as it developed in the 18-19th centuries, helped to build Press 'freedom'—i.e. freedom from dependence on Government subsidies. The later stage of large display advertising, placed by agencies at the behest of vast trusts and combines, and channelled to the big papers through the Northcliffian device of the net sales certificate, has in fact guaranteed Press un-freedom.

For the Press of the labour movement there can be only one answer—the winning of circulation substantial enough to keep the papers going through their sales revenue. The only way to win circulation is by consistent campaigning, by well-documented exposures, by fighting with every piece of ingenuity, every device of political acumen and journalistic technique, for a left policy. A strong, fighting paper wins devotion and support; a pusillanimous paper, a punch-pulling paper, loses it.

The broadest and most apt illustration of this point can be taken from the pre-war *Reynolds News*. Launched early in 1936, the 'new' *Reynolds*—as the radically restyled paper was called—responded keenly to its times. Sydney Elliott, then editor, master-minded the most striking all-in left campaign of those stirring Popular Front days. The United Peace Alliance (the title he chose), was designed to include everyone from the Liberals to the Communists, attracted significant mass support in the Co-operative movement, and helped to push *Reynolds*' circulation up from under 300,000 to the half-million mark—a figure much higher, in relative circulation terms, than it would be now.

Conducting this united campaign externally, so to say, Elliott practised a united editorial policy internally. That is, although personally anti-Communist he welcomed Communists and outstanding lefts on his staff. Apart from myself there were, among others, the late Montagu Slater, David Raymond, Gordon Schaffer. I recollect a typical occasion when Elliott was faced with a smear on me transmitted from topmost CWS circles; he was told that I was a 'leading Comintern agent'. His reply—a single paragraph—was 'When I can be given evidence impugning Mr. Hutt's professional integrity and technical competence I will entertain it. Until then I am not interested'. Nothing more was heard.

When, after the war, *Reynolds* succumbed to right-wing pressure and departed from this line, it began to go downhill. Just as Elliott's forward-looking unity line had been typified in his retention of me in a leading position on his staff, so the retrograde rightward line was typified by *Reynolds'* sacking of Gordon Schaffer, then deputy editor, in 1953 because of his left associations (notably with the British Peace Committee). By the time the desperate decision was taken to rename *Reynolds* the *Sunday Citizen* and turn it into a tabloid (in 1962) circulation had slumped to a point below even the 296,000-odd of the 'old' *Reynolds* before the Wicklow Street rebirth of 1936.

It is now a matter of record that last autumn the *Sunday Citizen* was in extremis; only unprecedented concessions in staffing and other ways by the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation saved it. And, as PKTF general secretary Granville Eastwood has said, all this has done is to give the *Sunday Citizen* a 'breathing-space in which to establish it on a more sound foundation'. That sound foundation can only be a left political one.

Of course it is true that a lively, uniting, aggressive political line needs the highest journalistic skill and technique to put it over; it is equally true that man does not live by politics alone, and that wide human interests must be well catered for in any paper that is to succeed. How is this to be attained?

Non-capitalist forms of organisation and management are, unfortunately, not so far very successful in the conduct of newspapers. This is particularly true of the co-operative form, as the Co-operative Press (publishers of the *Sunday Citizen*) have shown. Elected Management Committees with no knowledge of the complicated business of newspaper production and promotion can be quite catastrophic. I recall how, when the plans for the 'new' *Reynolds* were being

discussed in 1935-36, Elliott proposed substantial changes, and an increase, in the editorial staff. The management committee rejected his staff schedule out-of-hand, one aged nonentity voicing the feelings of his colleagues in immortal words: 'Why should we increase editorial staff when we've just spent all that money on new Linotypes? I always thought the idea of new machinery was to save labour, not increase it'.

I suppose it is possible that this kind of grotesque ignorance could be countered by some form of direct trade union representation in management (the PKTF is now considering something of this sort in respect of the Co-operative Press); but countered it surely has to be. Labour movement papers dare no longer lag behind their best-conducted capitalist competitors in either management or editorial techniques.

Editorial expertise comes first. Labour movement newspapers have to appreciate this fact, and its implications, not less astutely than does the successful capitalist proprietor. The labour movement traditionally suspects journalists, and not without reason. Humbert Wolfe's celebrated jeer—

There is no need to bribe or twist,
Thank God, the British journalist;
But seeing what the man will do,
Unbribed, there's no occasion to

—struck a deep chord. This suspicion, or at best wariness, has been true of socialist countries as well; the feeling was so strong in the Soviet Union that within the last decade special steps had to be taken to raise the status of the journalist in Soviet society. But the point is that without journalists you don't have a paper; without soldiers you don't win a war. Neither the art of journalism nor the military art can be judged in the abstract, only on their aim and purpose.

The labour movement should therefore cherish its journalists, recognising that their skill is of a high and unusual order. Of course it cannot spoil and corrupt them as do the newspaper monopolists; but it must see that they are treated as professionals.

I would like to think that in this significant year when, above all, the *Daily Worker* faces the major advance of its 36-year career as the banner-bearer of Britain's Left, the movement should show that it understands the vital need to build the editorial cadres that its papers must have if they are to succeed.

POVERTY

Alan Brown

POVERTY is not one of the fashionable words in present-day Britain. But in an age when great resources are spent attempting to submerge and disguise the problems of the people beneath an endless chatter about 'affluence', it is a word whose meaning remains intact, refusing to be prettified. Poverty still portrays a state of privation, of the human being forced to endure conditions of life far lower than society can provide. Its effects are as harsh as ever on people in many parts of the world. Nor is it confined to nations still suffering the effects of foreign, colonial rule; for at the heart of the metropolitan countries it rubs shoulders with immense wealth.

Britain, too, has its poverty. Old people freeze to death in their homes; the 'wage-stop' forces low wage-earners and their families to stay below National Assistance levels; millions inhabit houses with no hot water tap, no fixed bath or separate lavatory; and deprivation affects young and old alike. But it is often argued that poverty has little significance in Britain—that rising standards are the 'norm' and the 'reality', and poverty is a phenomenon confined to a few unfortunates who have somehow slipped through the social security net. Anyhow, it is said, poverty is constantly declining.

These comfortable assumptions, however, though assiduously spread, are not held with sufficient confidence in official quarters for statistics, reports or surveys to be produced showing either the static position or the trends. On the contrary, those who study the problem have constantly to complain at the dearth of centrally-collected material providing even the barest facts about poverty, its causes, extent, character, or effects. Even statistics from which such things could be derived are strangely omitted from the ever-increasing torrent of materials produced by Ministries and 'independent' research organisations.

From time to time, however, reports appear—usually from independent people or groups, fighting their way through the lack of official material—which show that poverty exists in Britain, is a more widespread phenomenon than is thought, and is far from withering away under the warm sun of welfare provisions. Likewise with much-propagated theories about a grand redistribution of wealth inside Britain over the past 30 years, it is the individual probers and researchers who have set the record straight against the massive Press and other distortions.

The most recent study of poverty in Britain has appeared in a paper from Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend entitled *The Poor and the Poorest**, which flatly contradicts the conventional, mass-produced picture of poverty and inequality disappearing in the 'Welfare State'. Two main aspects of the report make it a particularly valuable contribution to the subject: the statistical research done, and its argumentation around the problem of poverty.

Its purpose was to make a fresh analysis of the Ministry of Labour's Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953, 1954 and 1960 in order 'to secure evidence about poverty and inequality' (p. 12). The major findings are based on finding how many people in those two years were living: (a) below National Assistance rates, and (b) below a level equal to 140 per cent of NAB rates. As poverty levels the authors regard these as somewhat arbitrary, but had not the resources to establish entirely new ones. What were their major statistical findings? They were, briefly, that between 1953-1954 and 1960:

The estimated total of persons in households with low levels of living (i.e. all below 140 per cent of N.A.B. rates) increased from nearly 4 million to nearly 7½ million; and

The estimated total of persons in households living below the basic assistance scale increased from about 600,000 to about 2 million (p. 58).

Not surprisingly, these two stark sets of figures have caught the attention of many reviewers (*The Times* headed its review 'Poverty spreads in Britain, Sociologists Say'). Abel-Smith and Townsend point out clearly that these bald figures have to be approached with much caution (mainly because, once more, the material from which they had to work was imperfect even for their modest requirements). The figures in general, they say, 'considerably understate the number of households and persons with low levels of living' (p. 21). So poverty, even accepting 140 per cent of NAB as the appropriate financial cut-off point, affects more than 7½ million. However, this understatement of the numbers involved was greater in the earlier years than the later, and the gap between them would thus be emphasised.

The statistical cautions are important to a full understanding of the research done, and indeed to the problems of people working in the field. This is a further good reason to go to the original. But, taken altogether, they do not invalidate the major findings of the

*Brian Abel-Smith, Professor of Social Administration, London School of Economics and Political Science, and Peter Townsend, Professor of Sociology, University of Essex. G. Bell & Sons, 15s.

authors—that between the two years in question, there was an increase in the number of people in Britain living in poverty.

Several factors were at work, one being the increase in the number of old people, living on inadequate pensions and some with National Assistance supplements. The following, however, has created great interest:

Possibly the most novel finding is the extent of poverty among children. For over a decade it has been generally assumed that such poverty as exists is found overwhelmingly among the aged.

They estimated that about three million of the 7½ million in poverty in 1960 were over pensionable age—i.e. less than half of the total—and there were 2¼ million children.

Thus quantitatively the problem of poverty among children is more than two-thirds of the size of poverty among the aged (p. 65).

The proportion of poverty had increased for every size of household—nearly doubling in the case of two-person households, varying in the middle ranges, and more than doubling in those with six or more persons. The following, which helps to explain why this was so, will speak volumes to trade unionists:

Of all the persons in the low expenditure households (in 1953-4) as many as 36.4 per cent were in households whose head was in full-time work. This is perhaps one of the most interesting and important results to emerge from the analysis (p. 30).

Poverty among the aged, poverty among children, poverty among wage-earners. Though the papers findings can only be dealt with shortly, they show that poverty is not an insignificant or a shrinking evil for the British people, despite the 'never had it so good' mythology (still alive today in many forms). The authors make the following comment:

By the 1950's, both major political parties had a vested interest in making the creation of the 'Welfare State' seem a greater change than it actually was. Both wanted to gain political credit for introducing it, and the Labour Party in particular wanted to gain or sustain electoral popularity because of its legislative programme of 1945-51 . . . The Conservative Party had a two-fold motive—first to gain the credit for original inspiration of the Welfare State but secondly to show that it had become unnecessarily extravagant. Middle-class anxieties about the 'burden' of taxation could be legitimated by the belief that welfare had become excessive. Certain types of information could be interpreted according to these various attitudes (p. 11-12).

They take a different view:

Our point is, first, that society has tended to make a rather sweeping interpretation of such evidence as there is about the reduction of poverty and the increase of equality since the war and, secondly, this evidence is a lot weaker than many social scientists have supposed (p. 12).

They are not the first to comment on the attempt to compound a mythology of 'affluence' out of the changes that have taken place in Britain over the past decade or so. As long or longer hours were being worked; a million more women entered industry; there was continuous monetary inflation, a fast growth of hire-purchase, the introduction of some automation, and a great development of mass production; new materials and products were introduced; the arms bill soared—and, of course, the mass persuasion apparatus came into its own. Such were some of the elements which were blended together to produce the 'affluence' theories.

The misuse of statistics (themselves produced with some selectivity) also played its part. A few years ago, Professor R. M. Titmuss demolished the foundations of those who proclaimed that the tax system had a built-in 'redistributor of wealth' and that inequality had been progressively eliminated since the war. He chided the Board of Inland Revenue for allowing its findings to be twisted to that end, and commented:

Every year, on the occasion of the publication of the Board's report, the National press is filled with accounts of how inequality is diminished and how the rich are disappearing as a distinctive class. It is seldom if ever announced that in most years these accounts are based on the collection and tabulation of administrative statistics. *In time we come to believe them as these results are purveyed without qualification, and more and more textbooks on public finance and allied subjects report them as established indisputable facts.** (Emphasis added.)

He showed in a lengthy analysis not only that the Board's statistics were misleading when used to 'prove' a diminishing inequality—but that they were becoming increasingly so.

Finally, perhaps the most important and significant part of the report's argumentation—concerning poverty, its meaning and appraisal. The authors point out (using a Board of Inland Revenue term) that we need to develop better ways of measuring 'net accretion of economic power'—i.e. 'the individual's command over the use of society's scarce resources' (p. 10). This concept is equally valuable

**Income Distribution and Social Change*, George Allen & Unwin, 1962, p. 192.

when applied to the millionaire (often hiding his true income) and the poorest, deprived of precisely that command over resources. The authors argue about poverty:

In any objective sense the word has no absolute meaning which can be applied in all societies at all times. Poverty is a relative concept . . . It refers to a variety of conditions involving differences in home environment, material possessions and educational and occupational resources as well as in financial resources—most of which are measurable, at least in principal. Income or expenditure as defined in this paper should be regarded as only one of the possible indicators. We need to develop other indicators of the command of individuals and families over resources (p. 63).

This is the starting point for the study not only of poverty, but of the condition of the mass of the people under capitalism. It is something which the Ministry of Labour's glut figures for 'average earnings' are used to conceal. The concept of studying all facets of the life of the people (and of the monopolists) reaches to the heart of the question of inequality, of the effects of class exploitation and domination, and thus of what lies behind the hocus-pocus of the 1950's and '60s.

Through its ownership and control of the means of production, and its drive for maximum profit, the capitalist class deprives all working people of the full use and control of the wealth they produce. Control of their individual environments is frustrated to one degree or another by lack of money, education, accommodation, transport, food, warmth, security and a host of vital necessities, which are made available in smaller measure than society is capable of providing them. In its more extreme forms, we name that deprivation, poverty. And poverty only has a meaning where class inequalities produce deprivation. The measurement of poverty, therefore, is a measurement of the degree to which exploitation hits a section of the people—while in some measure it hits every section. It is this fact which makes poverty not a side issue but an integral part of the class-ridden society of present-day Britain. It links together all who are exploited, and cannot be solved until that problem is resolved in the interest of the working people.

MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

Clemens Dutt

NO student of Marxism can afford to neglect the new work by Maurice Cornforth*, which is devoted to the so-called linguistic philosophy or conceptual analysis, a trend that for the time being predominates in academic circles in Britain and extends to the USA and elsewhere (e.g. Sweden). This trend is the present culmination of the characteristic British empirical tradition that can trace a continuous evolution from Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, and has given rise in recent times to a sequence of varieties with various names, such as empirio-criticism, logical positivism, semantics, pragmatism, etc., each of which has reigned for a time and then usually been superseded. As a guide through this labyrinth and for an analysis of these stages of historical development one could not desire a better commentator than the author, as his various books in this field have already shown. He is a trained student of philosophy, he has expert knowledge of the literature and he is a skilled and clear expositor of complicated and difficult material. Moreover, as a Marxist he is especially fitted to make a critical assessment of both the positive and negative features of these modern philosophical ideas.

He has now given us an important book of wide scope which is the product of thorough and original study. It is divided into three parts, the first of which is devoted to the historical roots and course of evolution of British empiricism and logical theory. The author does not even shrink from tackling the difficult task of describing the contents of Bertrand Russell's *Principia Mathematica* and the subsequent subtleties of logical and mathematical analysis, although his account cannot be easy reading. The attempt to apply these subtleties as a basic method of approach to philosophical problems led to a variety of theories based on formal logical analysis of the wording of statements, the 'doctrinaire absurdity' of which, Maurice Cornforth exposes. He shows that in its earlier forms this linguistic philosophy, like previous empirical theories, despite its claim to do away with the controversy between materialism and idealism, could not but lead to subjective idealism and solipsism (as Lenin had done in masterly fashion in the case of empirio-criticism).

**Marxism and the Linguistic Philosophy*, Maurice Cornforth, Lawrence and Wishart, 378 pp., 55s.

The second and main section of the book deals with the newer varieties of linguistic philosophy. They mainly stem from Wittgenstein, who after wholly condemning his earlier linguistic theory, which he had once claimed 'finally solved' all the problems of philosophy, put forward a new approach based on the 'actual use of language'. By invoking this talisman, he now claimed to do away with all need for philosophical theories because it proved that the problems they raise do not really exist. His disciples have further elaborated this method of approach and Cornforth finds a great deal of value in it although he also subjects it to annihilating criticism.

In the first place, he accepts the claim that the linguistic philosophy has succeeded in getting rid of subjective idealism. His general appreciation is summed up in his statement: 'Whatever some critics may say about the triviality, narrowness and parochialism of the linguistic philosophy . . . it is a fact that to have established that an inquiry about thought is an inquiry about the uses of language represents a considerable achievement' (p. 171). For, he says: 'thought cannot be separated from the uses of language, so that the most fundamental questions of philosophy are indeed questions concerning uses of language' (p. 253). It may perhaps be doubted whether many Marxists would agree with this. Again, in his final word in this section, Cornforth says: '. . . this philosophy is far from trivial or negligible. In its own very specialised sphere of linguistic investigation, it has undoubtedly made discoveries, clarifications and criticisms of lasting value to any philosophy which sets out to comprehend human life and purpose.'

In contrast to these generous acknowledgements, however, most of this main section is devoted to a trenchant criticism of the ideas propounded by the linguistic philosophers. Cornforth joins issue with them on their own ground, with abundant quotations from their works. He shows in detail that the 'actual use of language' as a criterion is a myth, involving as it does that a certain set-up of culture and belief is taken as a standard. In an important chapter on ethics he notes that these philosophers save themselves from irrationalism—arising from the view that moral judgments are purely expressions of feeling—by rightly regarding such judgments as prescriptions universally acceptable to all men, but it still leaves them tangled up in questions of the conflict of ideals and interests that actually exist in society.

His further criticism concerns particularly three main points.

Firstly, linguistic philosophy takes a totally unhistorical view of philosophy, regarding it as only a succession of verbal muddles. But the problems of philosophy which have so passionately agitated many minds cannot be disposed of by pretending that they do not exist. Secondly, the narrow specialisation on points about language deprives philosophy of theory and aim, 'beating a full retreat from any conception of philosophy as a guide to understanding the real world and its laws, and as a guide in practical life'. Marx said: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways, the point is to change it.' The linguistic philosophers do not even try to interpret the world, much less to change it. Thirdly, the linguistic philosophy is a class conditioned ideology, reflecting the conditions of modern capitalist society. Its social roots are to be found in the bourgeois ideology that seeks to justify the results of modern science but to reject materialism and its revolutionary consequences.

The final section of the book is devoted to Marxism. This is no reproduction of hackneyed text-book statements. It is a fundamental, thought-provoking restatement of the Marxist position, not only as regards dialectical materialism and the laws of thought, but notably in their application to the development of human society, with valuable chapters on socialist-humanism, communism, morality, etc.

In his final summing up, Cornforth concludes that, despite its positive achievements, the linguistic philosophy, like others before it, 'has only reached another dead end and can only be carried forward by completely overturning its basic and essentially negative pre-suppositions'. Nevertheless, one gets the impression that in his treatment of dialectical materialism, the author has adopted various propositions put forward by the linguistic philosophers in regard to logic and the laws of nature and thought. The result is that his account of these principles cannot but be regarded as open to controversy for, as he himself admits in his foreword, some of his points 'go contrary to very generally and traditionally accepted interpretations of Marxism'.

In another passage, Cornforth speaks of the possibility of 'formulating a general materialist and revolutionary philosophy of man, totally different from the linguistic philosophy, but at the same time not contradicting but, on the contrary, incorporating the positive findings of its detailed investigations'. Such incorporation cannot but look like an endeavour to reconcile the linguistic analytic criteria—so remote from the test of material reality and practice—with dialectical materialism. It could give rise to an impression that Marxist philosophy and a suitably refined linguistic philosophy

are two parallel streams of modern thought, which have each something to contribute, much as in a cruder form some thinkers believe in reconciling Marx and Freud.

To a certain extent this impression is supported also by the emphasis on the positive achievements of the linguistic philosophy, as well as by the suggestion that its theoretical advances in technical problems of logic and language are comparable with the achievements of science and technology under capitalism, while its negative features are comparable to the misuse and frustration of these achievements in the source of private profit. That could imply that the main count against the linguistic philosophy is not that it is anti-materialist and anti-dialectical, but that it has been misused.

In contrast to the undialectical approach of the modern empiricists, it is well to bear in mind Engels' statement in *Dialectics of Nature* that 'the science of thought is, like every other, a historical science, the science of the historical development of human thought' and, further, 'the theory of the laws of thought is by no means an "eternal truth" established once for all as philistine reasoning assumes to be the case with the word "logic" '. Marx stressed this even from his first study of Hegelian philosophy. In a letter to his father in 1937, while still a student in Berlin University, he strongly condemned the method of 'mathematical dogmatism' which 'argues round and about without the thing taking shape as something living, something richly developing' (MEGA, Abt. 7, Bd. 1, Hlbd. 2, p. 215). It is worth while citing also, for example, the late Professor Gordon Childe, who from his wide knowledge of anthropology, and philosophy, cogently argued 'The laws of logic are neither fore-ordained statutes to which thinking must conform, nor universally valid accounts of the operations of all rational thinking . . . Hence, any society may be allowed its own logic.' (Hobhouse Memorial lecture on 'Social Worlds of Knowledge', 1948.) Just as Leninism is a historical development of Marxism, so Marxism is a materialist development of the dialectics first worked out in detail by Hegel. Deeper study of dialectics is of more importance for practical social advance than any attempt to utilise the propositions of the linguistic philosophers who disregard all motion and development.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Reckoning

The Earl of Avon

Cassell, 622 pp., 42s.

IN THE FIRST VOLUME of his political memoirs, reviewed in these columns three years ago, Lord Avon (Anthony Eden) described the pre-war years when he was a Minister in the Baldwin and Chamberlain Tory governments. He now goes to the period of the Second World War, when he was successively Dominions Secretary under Chamberlain (1939-40), Secretary for War (1940) and Foreign Secretary (1940-45)—both under Churchill. Thus he was close to control of British policy throughout that immense struggle.

The book therefore could not fail to present considerable interest. As an old friend of the Prime Minister, he gives new facts about those sides of Churchill's policy with which he was in contact. His personal experiences in various theatres of the War are brightly told. But the most interesting of all are the revelations of his long-concealed hostility to the Soviet Union during the War—hostility hitherto regarded as the special characteristic of Neville Chamberlain in (jointly with Hitler) preparing it.

Sometimes his omissions serve to underline this, more often his admissions.

Thus, he defends Munich as 'the price to be paid for our military weakness' (p. 29) and says not a word about the steady rejection of Soviet offers of consultations and co-operation in 1938. Similarly, he omits from his brief account of negotiations with the Soviet Union in 1939 any criticism of the consistent efforts by Chamberlain and Foreign Secretary Halifax

to escape from an Anglo-Franco-Soviet pact which would have stopped Hitler.

Again, Eden omits any reference to the notorious officially sponsored pamphlet by Lord Lloyd, *Britain's Case* (November 1939), with its preface by Halifax, reproaching Hitler for 'betraying Europe' by his pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Union. But he shows where his own sympathies lay, by quoting with satisfaction a speech in Liverpool in February 1940, criticising Hitler for letting the 'Red Dragon' take him for a ride (after all his Ambassador Ribbentrop's denunciations of Bolshevism) and warning them that there might be worse to come (pp. 94-5).

After the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June, 1941, his occasional mentioning of Soviet pressure for a second front in the West invariably provides the occasion for some hostile comment—though he gives us a peep at Churchill's real mind in November 1941 (when the Red Army was retreating): quoting him (p. 282) as advocating a policy of 'strength' in dealing with Stalin, because 'his need of us is greater than our need of him'.

Throughout his description of the subsequent years, Eden does not find one word of sympathy for the Soviet people for their enormous privations and losses in dead, military and civilian, and for the utter destruction of countless towns and villages. But in return he 'felt very sorry' for the 'pleasant enough boys' whom he saw as German prisoners in December, 1941: 'God knows what their fate will be' (p. 299).

Needless to say, Eden says not a word about three outstanding anti-Soviet declarations by official spokesmen which made history during the war—the Minister of Aircraft Production's speech on July 14, 1941, hoping that the Soviet and German

armies would destroy each other; the circular from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, on August 1, 1941, sympathising with his officers in their 'disgust' at finding Britain in alliance with the Soviet Union; and the speech against the Second Front made by Bevin at the TUC on September 7, 1943, to the effect that metal (for the British Forces) was 'cheaper than men' (millions of whom had already died in the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe, of course).

However, he does reveal that on January 28, 1942, nine months before Churchill's memorandum advocating an anti-Soviet alliance after the war, Eden was already warning his cabinet colleagues that, if Germany were defeated, 'Russia's position on the European continent will be unassailable' and that the Soviet Union's frontier with Poland (i.e. the return of West Ukraine and West Byelorussia to the USSR) must not be recognised (pp. 318-9). Similarly, he reveals that in November, 1944, he was already pressing on Churchill the view that 'the lesson of the disaster of 1940' was—not the fiasco of attempting to use Hitler or anyone else against the 'Red Dragon'—but 'the need to build up a common defence association in Western Europe' (pp. 494-5). And we find that, before Churchill sent his famous directive to Montgomery to collect arms for reissue to the defeated Nazi troops 'if the Soviet advance continues', 'Eden cabled to him from Washington on April 18, 1945, urging that Montgomery should take Lubeck and the Americans Prague for the same reason' (p. 530)—adding three weeks later 'sometimes feel that we are entering a period like that of second Balkan war transferred on to world stage' (p. 535). In the second Balkan war (1913) Greece and Serbia—after joining with Bulgaria to defeat their common aggressor Turkey and achieve

national liberation the previous year—had turned against Bulgaria, and were joined by Rumania in defeating her.

Lord Avon's memoirs, indeed, throw even more light on postwar history than on that of the war years.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

The Irish Question, 1840-1921

Nicholas Mansergh

George Allen & Unwin, 316 pp, 42s.

AT FIRST GLANCE this book of commentaries on aspects of Anglo-Irish relations from 1841 to 1921, written by Professor Mansergh, a prolific writer of books on Ireland, arouses curiosity despite its derivative character and dependence on secondary sources. Such chapter headings as 'European and Irish Nationalisms' and 'The Romantic Ideal in Irish Politics' indicate historical and cultural fields in which much remains to be done. But unfortunately it is a work like a blind cabbage with lush outer fronds but no firm heart, never rising above the level of a university lecture.

Its method is eclectic, the only discernible principle being that 'political nationalism' is the essence of the Irish struggle, economic struggles being subordinate to the political aim of nationality. The author is naturally hereby involved in an attempt to 'refute' Marx, and chapter three is devoted to this object. His method of selecting quotations leaves much to be desired. On page 97 he quotes verbatim Marx's letter to Kugelman explaining that in supporting the Fenian prisoners he had 'other objects besides those of . . . speaking . . . for the oppressed Irish.' Yet he founds his argument on the misquotation 'an object other than'—and this all tends to the conclusion that Marx did not regard Irish national emancipation as an integral part of the general social

process, but was merely making use of it for his own purposes. The same thing happens to the quotation that the 'English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland.' This reappears (in a discussion of relations between British and Irish workers) in a revised form, namely that the 'English working class will never accomplish anything until it gets rid of the Irish,' something quite different which Marx never said. Anybody can 'refute' Marx by making a muddle of his writings.

One gets the feeling that 'The Ulster Question' is the tiny heart of the specious vegetable. If 'political nationalism' (i.e. nationalism for nationalism's sake) had not existed, it would be necessary to invent it. Having been created in the teeth of Marx it is available for Ulster. The essential proposition of British imperialism is that the partition of Ireland was accomplished in response to a legitimate refusal on the part of 'Ulster' to enter an all-Ireland Parliament. Professor Mansergh quotes Lloyd George, the main architect of partition, through his secretary Tom Jones who stated that the Prime Minister made clear his refusal to 'coerce the people of Ulster' on March 7, 1917.

Professor Mansergh does not enquire into the credentials of Jones' statement. The all-Ireland Trade Union Congress voted against partition with two dissentients in 1916 and unanimously in 1917. Is this not relevant to the views of the 'people of Ulster'? But the erudition of selective quotation is shown at its most unsatisfactory, in that the famous letter which completely destroys the substance of Tom Jones' assertion is not referred to. It was sent by Lloyd George to Carson on May 29, 1916. In it he stated that 'we must make it clear that . . . Ulster does not *whether she wills it or not*, merge with the rest of Ireland.' How's

that for refusing to coerce the 'people of Ulster'?

It should be clear from the above that while Professor Mansergh's book can be read with profit, it is not the impartial work of erudition it as first sight appears to be, but an extremely polished and accomplished background to what might be termed the 'neo-Unionist' position, which may be summarised as 'hold the north but woo the south.'

One word of praise must be spoken. The book is beautifully printed and produced.

C. DESMOND GREAVES.

South East Asia in Turmoil

Brian Crozier

Pelican Original, 214 pp., 4/6d.

NOT AN OUTSTANDING contribution to the mounting literature on South East Asia, and especially Vietnam as the main 'trouble spot' (Crozier's phrase). The summary of recent history is very potted, permeated by a flippant patronage and retailing all the well-known myths. There is no reason, of course, for him to be sympathetic to Communism, and this leads him to depict President Ho Chi Minh, for instance, as just another wily, conspiratorial politician.

The nationalism which inspired the countries in this area to throw off colonialism, he believes leads to aggressiveness towards other countries. In a chapter headed 'Pax Americana?' he concludes that criticism of U.S. presence and activities in Asia (no matter from where it comes) is dangerous. It could lead to a new period of 'American isolationism' eventually leaving Europe undefended—against what, he leaves to be imagined!

His suggested reading list is very illuminating—it includes no book by an Asian writer.

HILDA VERNON.

A Reader's Guide to the Study of Marxism

Jack Cohen and James Klugmann

Communist Party, 82 pp., 7s. 6d.

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Here are Marxist riches in abundance, set out in a clear, workmanlike way under main heads which range from 'Marxist-Leninist Philosophy' to the 'British Labour Movement', with

reading programmes suggested for each.

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Use it, add to it (I do so here and now with the great Thomas Hardy, whose *Jude the Obscure* is surely a reading 'must'), and yet we will go back to it again and again I am sure. Put this little book on top of your shopping list as a gift for a beginner—and you will so hate to part with it you will probably order another for yourself.

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A Newcastle reader found the Fairfield article timely: 'Something to get your teeth into—the lads in our Yard thought the points made were very sound'.

I would like also to quote from a letter written to our Editor by an African living here at present: 'I had for sometime heard of your illustrious journal, but never had a chance of becoming a subscriber. When I read articles by you in the Ghanaian newspaper *The Spark*, I became so moved by these that I sacrificed in order to subscribe to your journal, which always carries articles that should not be missed by a chap of my enthusiasms'. The kind of tribute that makes our month!

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